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Yeadon, Richard
speech... at the Pilgrim
celebration, at Plymouth,
Mass, August 1, 1852.

1852.



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Book .Y31

SPEECH
OF
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RICHARD YEADON, ESQ.,
OF
CHARLESTON, S. C.,
AT THE
PILGRIM CELEBRATION,
AT
PLYMOUTH, MASS.,
AUGUST 1, 1853.

Extract from the Boston Courier, August 5th, 1853.

"On the first page we have placed the patriotic speech of Mr. Yeadon, at the Pilgrim Dinner, at Plymouth, on the 1st instant, which speech was complimented by hisses from certain crazy and rabid abolitionists."

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SPEECH OF MR. YEADON,
AT THE
Pilgrim Celebration at Plymouth.

AUGUST 1, 1853.

After Mr. Everett had ended his eloquent address, and the admirable letter of Mr. Winthrop had been read, Richard Warren, Esq., the President of the Pilgrim Society, and of the day, announced the following toast :

“South Carolina—We welcome her sons to the birth-place of New England.”

The loud cheering, with which this sentiment was received, having subsided, the President introduced RICHARD YEADON, Esq., of South Carolina, one of the Editors and proprietors of the *Charleston Courier*, to the company, and called on him to respond. Mr. Yeadon accordingly responded as follows :

Descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers !—The distinguished and generous compliment, just paid to the State of South Carolina, and the enthusiastic manner in which it has been received, by this vast and patriotic throng, devolve on me, in the opinion of my fellow South Carolinians here present, the office and the duty of attempting to make a suitable response. In memory, however, of the noble and classic strains of eloquence, which have just rolled from distinguished New England lips, and ravished New England ears and hearts, this day—*those* strains (pointing to Mr. Everett), which are only comparable to the music of the spheres, and lips which, like those of the holy prophets of old, may justly be styled lips of fire—I almost shrink appalled from the task, and dread to mingle the feeble and discordant notes of my penny whistle with the trumpet

tones and rich harmonies of illustrious speakers, worthy of the Athenian rostrum, or the Roman Senate, in their palmyest days. (Applause.) But never shall it be said that the Palmetto Fort failed to respond to Bunker Hill, either in the interchange of the friendly salute, or in the discharge of vollied thunder and iron hail, against the common foes of our common country. Like the gallant and lamented Butler, the commander and the hero of the ever glorious Palmetto regiment, I must not, and will not, shun a place in the picture, though it be near the flashing of the guns. (Applause.)

Sons of the Pilgrim Sires!—I feel honored in my association with you, this day, in the festive, although *temperate*, celebration of an event, than which none more important, in its bearings on human destiny, is chronicled on the historic page. It is the departure of your pilgrim fathers and your pilgrim mothers, from Delft Haven, on the 1st of August, 1620, in that frail and often imperilled bark, the *Mayflower*, under the guidance of their pastor and of their God, to seek religious and establish civil liberty, in the wilderness of America—to found, on an eternal rock, the rock of truth and reason, externally symbolled by the Plymouth Rock, near which we now reverentially and joyously stand—a new empire of freedom, destined to solve successfully the problem of popular self-government, and to surpass, in extent of territorial domain, in greatness and glory, and in the production of the greatest good to the greatest number, all other empires, ancient or modern, which history records in her instructive annals, or which yet play their parts on the grand theatre of national existence. Descended, as I am maternally, and as numbers of my fellow South Carolinians are, either paternally or maternally, from Huguenot ancestors, who fled from even greater persecutions than did your Puritan fathers, and encountered equal perils and made equal sacrifices, with them, for religion and liberty, I can fully sympathize and fraternize in feeling, in principle, and in *hope*, with this multitudinous concourse of worthy sons, assembled to do honor and reverence to worthy sires—decked and crowned as it is with the beaming presence of the lovely daughters of the Pilgrim mothers.

Permit me, fellow citizens of Massachusetts, to seize this occasion, for the purpose of twining a common garland in honor of the illustrious and now immortal trio, who, after serving their common country, with an extent and variety of service, that made *them* and *her* glorious, have gone, successively and at short intervals, to the grave, to be mourned by their mother States with a domestic and a hearthstone grief—a sorrow, like that of Rachel for her first born, refusing to be comforted ; by sister States, also, with responsive sympathy, and by the nation at large, as bereft at once of her brightest and most cherished jewels, and her strongest and noblest pillars.

Clay, Webster, and Calhoun were, beyond all comparison, *the three men of America* ; and long, if ever, will it be, ere three stars, equal in magnitude and lustre, will be again seen culminating at the same time on our national meridian. The similitudes and affinities in their gifts, history, and career, are numerous and striking. They were not far removed from each other in age, and they came very nearly at the same time on the arena of public and political life. Each, in the very incipency of his public career, was recognized as an intellectual Hercules, and sprang, at a single bound, to the loftiest eminence. Each, while living, was the most cherished son of his particular State ; and, now that all of them are tenants of the grave, neither of their mother States would exchange her dead Ossory for any living son in Christendom. Each, in his own section, stood without compeer in greatness, and in the popular affection ; yet each was regarded as the common property of the republic, rendering her illustrious service in the Senate, in the Cabinet, and in the field of diplomacy ; influencing her measures and her destiny, by their sage counsels, in peace and in war ; identified with her history and her onward march, and, in a large measure, constituting her fame. (Applause.) They all alike towered above the men of their country, and of their times, as moral and intellectual pyramids—intellectual giants, not among intellectual pigmies, but in the midst of an intellectual and enlightened generation.

They were, alike, orators, patriots and statesmen, of the first order, standing high in the admiration, esteem and veneration,

and held dear to the hearts of their countrymen, and they lived only to serve and bless their country. They were all indeed her benefactors, while living; and, in death, theirs is a glory, far beyond that which streams from the *mausoleum* of the victorious warrior; for *their* laurels are unstained with blood, and unmoistened with widows' and orphans' tears,—composed of, or at least entwined with the blessings of a grateful country—and their monument is that country itself, in all its high and palmy prosperity, in all its magnitude of territorial extent, in all its auguries of a future, beyond all parallel in the past, and likely to keep pace with the wildest hopes and dreams of the most excited fancy.

Not only was each of the glorious *triad* the popular favorite, in his own State and section; but they bore identical relations to City, State, section and nation. Boston, the Athens of America, Massachusetts, the cradle of the Revolution, New-England, the home of the Pilgrim Fathers, delighted to do honor to—nay, almost worshipped Daniel Webster, as “the bright Star of the East”—lavishing on him, “gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh”. Lexington, the seat of hospitality and intelligence, Kentucky, the eldest of the Western sisterhood of States, the far and mighty West, in all its prairied vastness, presented the laurel to Henry Clay, as the great Statesman of the West. Charleston, the Queen City of the South, South-Carolina, the native soil of the ever-green and ever-glorious Palmetto, the South—the sunny South—the home of chivalry and generous sentiment—did homage to John C. Calhoun, the pure and lofty patriot, the fearless champion of Southern rights and Southern honor. At home, each towered in unrivalled greatness; yet, when viewed, on the national plain, they rose in the similitude of three lofty and colossal columns, contrasted in their architecture, but equal in magnitude and height.

Each aspired to the chief magistracy of the republic, seeking the noble end by noble means, and with motives “that make ambition virtue;” and each alike failed to win the noble and glittering prize—each alike deserving, although not commanding success. There was, perhaps, too, a similarity in the reasons or causes of their common failure. Clay, when about to

make his great anti-abolition speech, in the Senate of 1839, was warned by a gifted Senator from South Carolina—the Hon. Wm. C. Preston—that, with his well-known opinions on the question of slavery, and in view of his aspirations for the Presidency, it would be as well not unnecessarily to offend the abolitionists; but the prompt and decisive answer of the great Kentuckian and patriotic American was—“I would rather be right than be President”; and the abolitionists became thenceforward his bitterest foes, and in all probability prevented his election to the Presidency in the subsequent contest with Mr. Polk. We learn, from a correspondent of the *New York Herald*, describing the eloquent and classical eulogy of the accomplished Choate, worthy to take its place in the richest casket and among the brightest gems of English oratory and English literature, that a similar incident adorns the history and illustrates the character of the illustrious Webster. When warned that his patriotic and constitutional course, on the compromise of 1850, would endanger his prospects for the chief magistracy of the nation, “with his great eyes glowing, and the very lightning flashing from his face,” his answer was—“I would not swerve a hair for the Presidency.” So, too, Calhoun, by the stiffness of his unpopular opinions on the subject of State rights, and especially the Roman firmness of his opinions on the great and absorbing question of Southern rights, interposed the chief barriers to his success as an aspirant for the Presidency. But, although they all stood alike excluded, by their very greatness, from the Presidential chair, every one agrees that they wanted nothing earthly to complete their fame; that they would have been more *honoring* than *honored* in wearing the Presidential laurel, and that, as “Senators in the Senate House,” they were as suns, in the political firmament, eclipsing, in lustre and in glory, the *lesser fires* that have twinkled their feeble radiance from the highest place of the republic. That there were diversities between them, in the structure of their minds, in the character of their intellectual endowments, in their mental habits, in their range of knowledge, and in their order and style of speaking and of eloquence, cannot be doubted; but, wherever they differed, it was as one star differeth from another

star in glory.—Webster was unrivalled as a logician, a rhetorician and constitutional lawyer; Clay, as an orator and practical Statesman, able and accustomed to sway, almost at will, the passions and actions of men; Calhoun, as a philosopher, sounding and probing, to their profoundest depths, all the great questions, which involved the interests of his country, or the destinies of his race.

Each was a practical farmer, fond of rural elegance and rural pursuits, and skilled in agricultural science—Calhoun, at Fort Hill, his elegant and well-ordered mountain farm; Clay, amid the shades and rural wealth of his beautiful and romantic Ashland; and Webster, at his cherished Marshfield farm, encircled by agricultural abundance, reposing from the cares of State, and literally and habitually dispensing neighbourly kindness and elegant hospitality.

Similar as they were in their lives, in death they were not far divided, and they met the final doom of mortality in very similar circumstances—each dying at the post of duty, and in the harness of the Republic—two of them at the national capital, and the third, during an intended temporary absence from it, but while yet charged with the cares of the nation. It is recorded, in Holy Writ, that “The glory of the terrestrial is one, and the glory of the celestial is another,” and these illustrious compeers, having co-equally participated in the one, in this mundane sphere, may we not piously indulge the hope that they are now rejoicing and beatified participants in the other—in the heavenly courts—the empyrean realms above?

Before closing my remarks, so inadequate to this great and interesting occasion, I cannot forbear doing reverence to the *manes* and the shade of the illustrious Webster, for his constitutional fidelity to the South. I ask the indulgence of the meeting, on this subject, even at the hazard of trespassing on delicate ground. I mean not to cast an apple of discord into this harmonious and joyous assemblage; but I would not be just to myself, nor true to *my section*, were I not to embrace the opportunity to do grateful reverence to the illustrious *dead*, and the illustrious *living*, who have nobly and fearlessly done *constitutional* justice to the South. Mr. Webster's truth and fidelity,

to the South, sprang from principle as well as feeling, and was imbibed from parental instruction; and it is no wonder that the boy who first, read and studied the constitution of his country on a *cotton* handkerchief, should have been unswerving and faithful in giving the full benefit of that constitution to the *cotton* States of the South and West. It was under this hallowed influence that, at Richmond, in 1840, he made the memorable declaration, that, “in the capital of the Old Dominion, under the October sun of a Virginia sky, he gave it to the wings of all the winds, to be borne to every corner of the Republic, and to every human ear, whether of friend or foe, of North or South, *on all the responsibility that belonged to him*, that there is no power, DIRECT OR INDIRECT, IN CONGRESS OR THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT, TO INTERFERE, IN THE SLIGHTEST DEGREE, WITH THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE SOUTH”; and it was in the same spirit that he took that noble stand, in 1850, which saved his country from fraternal strife and civil war—and the Union from dissolution. (Hisses and applause.) And, while thus, as a Southerner, rendering homage to the illustrious dead, let me also do homage to the illustrious living, and return my grateful thanks to the great speaker of the day, the gifted, the glorious Everett, (Webster’s worthy successor in the cabinet and in the Senate chamber,) for the declaration and sentiment, uttered by him in Congress, many, many, years ago, but still indelibly impressed on my memory,—“There is no cause in which I would more readily shoulder a musket, than to put down a servile insurrection in the South.” (Applause.)

Let me here, too, relate an anecdote or an incident, connected with the great Carolinian, and his love and admiration for Massachusetts and Boston. It was in my last conversation with him, just before he departed from Charleston, on his last mission to Washington, that he broke out in warm, glowing and loving eulogy of Massachusetts and Boston, referring to the time, when Josiah Quincy came as a missionary from Massachusetts to Charleston and South Carolina, to enlist the descendants of the Huguenots with the descendants of the Puritans, in the Boston tea party, in the coming struggle for American independence, which then cast its great shadow before—dwelling,

with evident pleasure, on the ancient ties, political and social, which once united the two sister commonwealths and the two sister cities, and discoursing eloquently on the affinities which yet obtained between them, in conservatism, in hospitality, and in social elegance and refinement.

Let such principles and feelings—such as animated the bosoms of the dead Webster and Calhoun, and such as yet animate the bosom of the living Everett, be cherished and imitated, and the Union will indeed be perpetual—realizing the loftiest and happiest destiny for itself—with the two oceans for its longitudinal, and the North Pole and the Isthmus of Darien for its latitudinal boundaries—civilizing, christianizing and peopling the American continent, and, by its glorious example and influence, regenerating the human race.

Under the inspiration of the occasion and the place, and of this glorious and lustrous presence of patriotism, intelligence and beauty, and in the language of the Union anthem of a gifted son of New England, (the Rev. Dr. Samuel Gilman,) who has made the sunny South his home, I would say, this day, from a full heart—

Dear to us the South's fair land—
 Dear the central mountain land—
 Dear New England's rocky strand—
 Dear the prairi'd West!

In conclusion, and in renewed reference to the great and lamented dead, I would suggest that a common memorial, in the shape of a work of art, so perfect in design and execution as to challenge and command the admiration of the world, should rise to perpetuate the memory, worth and services of the illustrious trio, so alike in life and in death—emanating either from the nation at large, or from the three States, more immediately concerned, as alike honored and alike bereaved. I would, therefore, propose as a sentiment—

CLAY, WEBSTER, CALHOUN!—Let a group of statuary, chiselled in Parian marble, perpetuate their memory at the national capital; or let Kentucky, Massachusetts and South Carolina pile a common monument to the illustrious three, at Ashland, Marshfield, or Fort Hill, to awaken the admiration and kindle the emulation of posterity, “till suns shall set and rise no more.”

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